NATURAL SITES

SI. No.	Name of site	State
1.	Kaziranga National Park (1985)	Assam
2.	Manas Wild Life Sanctuary (1985)	Assam
3.	Keoladeo National Park (1985)	Rajasthan
4.	Sunderban National Park (1987)	West Bengal
5.	Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks (1988, 2005)	Uttaranchal

Declaration of Ram Setu as national monument

†319. SHRI SHREEGOPAL WAS: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Madras High Court has directed to declare Ram Setu (between India and Sri Lanka) as national monument under the National Monument and Archaeological Place Law, 1958;

(b) whether its existence is the oldest in comparison to the many declared monuments;

(c) whether such sentiments alongwith logic have also been expressed by many archaeologists, legal experts, Members of Parliament, social and religious organizations; and

(d) what is the difficulty in declaring it national monument by keeping the above things in mind, if there is no difficulty or objection in it then what steps have been taken to make declaration by the Ministry?

THE MINISTER CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No such directions have been received from the Madras High Court.

(b) No archaeological study has been made in respect of Ram Setu by the Archaeological Survey of India.

(c) Such sentiments have been expressed by way of representations to the Government and petitions before Courts.

(d) As per the scientific evidence available so far, Ram Setu does not fulfil the criteria to be declared as a monument of national importance under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

Protection of cultural heritage sites in Uttarakhand

†320. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether work is under process to declare some villages of the State of Uttarakhand alongwith Dwarahat and Adibadri as 'cultural village' and whether the work is going on the special plan for the protection of the cultural heritages situated in these villages; and

†Original noiice of the question was received in Hindi